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Alumni You Outta to Know

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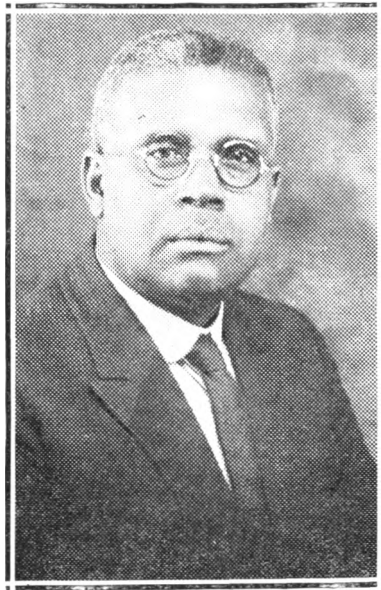
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ALUMNI YOU OUGHT TO KNOW.

**Sumner H. Lark, Assistant District Attorney, King's County, Brooklyn,
New York.**

ALL the children of Howard, and especially those who lived on "the hill" during the nineties, must have read with pleasure a short time ago the news item calling attention to the appointment of Mr. Sumner H. Lark to the office of Assistant District Attorney of King's County, New York, the first appointment of this kind ever given to a member of the Negro race. Mr. Lark has been a citizen of Brooklyn since 1900, a short time after his graduation from the college department of Howard University. At that time he represented, typically, the young man full of hope and ambition going forth into the world to seek fame and fortune. Believing that his



SUMNER H. LARK

future lay in a public career, he opened a printing office at 340 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, where he conducted a business for more than seventeen years, during which time he published the *Brooklyn Eye*, a paper which attracted unusual attention because of the support that it gave to the Democratic party. The *Commoner*, edited by William J. Bryan, the *Atlanta Constitution*, and other leading Democratic papers, were regularly on the exchange list of the *Eye*. Thus did young Lark choose his career.

In 1901 Mr. Lark joined the United Colored Democracy of Greater New York, which was cordially received and duly recognized by the great Tammany organization. This affiliation he claims to be the most advantageous for the Negro in the North, believing that the Democratic party is the poor man's party and that the principles advocated by it, excepting, of course, the sentiment of the South in reference to the race question, are in accord with the needs of the fellow farthest down. Because of his place in politics and his influence with the organization, Mr. Lark has

been actively interested in some of the fine things which the Democratic party has done in the interest of the Negroes of the State of New York. For example, the passage of the bill creating the Fifteenth Regiment, which had been vainly urged by the colored people of the State during the Republican administrations of Governors Black, Roosevelt, Higgins, Odell and Hughes. The Civil Rights Bill, now a law statute in New York State, and which has more "teeth" in it than any other similar bill as yet enacted in the United States, was also passed by the Democratic organization. Under this bill many convictions have taken place in the State—so many, indeed, that it is now a comparatively rare occurrence for a person of color to be refused accommodation in any public place. The organization also succeeded in passing an appropriation of \$25,000 toward the Emancipation Bill and appointed a commission composed entirely of colored men to promote an exposition celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the issuance of that historic document by Abraham Lincoln. Governor Sulzer appointed Mr. Lark Director General and one of the members of that commission.

Mr. Lark has also been active in other fields than politics. He is one of the founders of the Y. M. C. A. of Brooklyn, which is now housed in a large and commodious building. He is a member of the Elks, a member of Siloam Presbyterian Church, and is identified with many other social and civic organizations. In 1918 he purchased the Putnam Theatre with a seating capacity of one thousand and for a year and a half conducted a vaudeville and moving-picture house carrying an average pay-roll of \$1,000 per week, practically all of which went to colored employees. This business he sold in 1921, realizing more than \$20,000 on the transaction. He later purchased two twenty-family apartment houses, one on St. James Place and the other on Washington Avenue, and also a four-story business building on Fulton Street. In addition to this he owns his own home at 1859 Dean Street. On the tax-books of the City of New York Mr. Lark's total assessment on real estate is more than \$100,000.

During his early years of journalism Mr. Lark spent his evenings in the Brooklyn Law School, from which he was graduated in 1916, with the degree of LL. B., and was admitted to the bar a few months later, since which time he has practiced continuously. It was because of his long association with the Democratic party and, in the words of District Attorney Dodd, because of "Mr. Lark's ability, character, and standing," that he received the high honor which has recently been conferred upon him. The District Attorney's office of King's County has a force of twenty assistants and it is known that there were more than one thousand applicants for an appointment on the staff from the 30,000 members of the bar of New York City.

Mr. Lark is a native of South Carolina, having been born in Hamburg, not far from the city of Augusta, Georgia, on March 12, 1874. After finishing the public schools he studied at Haines Normal and Industrial Institute at Augusta, Georgia, then presided over by one of the most famous Negro educators, Miss Lucy C. Laney. He then went to Howard University, where he entered the college department, from which he was graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1897 in a class of six, the other members of which were H. C. Binford, W. J. R. Whitsett, George H. Harris, W. T. Shilcutt, and E. B. Branch. After finishing college Mr. Lark returned to Augusta, Georgia, where he taught Physics and Chemistry in Haines Institute. With a hankering for journalism, he resigned his position and began the publication of a daily newspaper, *The South*, which was issued for over a year without missing a number.

In 1898 Mr. Lark married Miss Virginia Jones, at that time a teacher in the high school of Augusta, Georgia. They have a family of seven children. Two of these are married—one is now a student at Hampton Institute, Virginia.

The career of Mr. Liza is a fine example to young men and women looking forward to a public career of what earnestness, honesty, and persistence can do, even in a crowded metropolis when backed by a good education and high character.

In two successive issues of the RECORD we are featuring Howard men who have made their way in the field of politics and who hold high public office in Greater New York, where the competition is keenest and where the fit survive. There is always room at the top.

